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MONTANA POST

PRESERVATION

Aug.-Sept. 1983

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

In this issue of Preservation

In one of the communities currently undertaking a systematic architectural and historical inventory of buildings, the survey team was asked, "Why are you worried about old buildings? Aren't historical people more important? Why should we make a record of each old building in town?" These questions deserve immediate answers, especially because we spend a great deal of space in this issue describing the community architectural and historical survey work that has been accomplished, or is now underway, in Montana. But the questions do not really demand a discussion of surveys, though I will end with a justification of those. Rather, these questions illuminate a basic skepticism or disbelief that buildings and sites can contribute to our understanding of the past. Until we address that fear or misgiving, it makes no sense to defend the processes by which we try to understand and evaluate historic properties.

The National Register of Historic Places program recognizes property as significant for three reasons: information, appearance, and association. Historic property provides us with information about how our ancestors lived their lives, traveled in the West, and built their homes and commercial buildings. It shows us construction techniques and historic appearances that period photographs failed to capture. It reminds us of people, events, and patterns that we might otherwise forget or take less seriously.

But overriding all of these formal reasons for valuing historic properties is a more elusive but nonetheless important one. Without touchable, useable, physical reminders of the past, that past, even our own, takes on a dreamlike, mythical quality. Especially here in the West, where our past has been one of Hollywood's most reliable subjects, reality is dramatically intermingled with falsehoods and glorifications. Our larger-than-life landscape promotes the sense of a grand but remote past, as does our love of and familiarity

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Round-up of Survey Work in Montana

SHELVED WITH PERIODICALS

During the last four years that the historic preservation survey has been underway in Montana, a substantial number of communities throughout the state have been surveyed to some degree. As we begin another year's survey effort and welcome your applications for historic preservation assistance, we thought it might be useful to review what has been accomplished to date.

Anaconda: In 1979, a team of surveyors from the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER, now a branch of the National Park Service) inventoried buildings in downtown Anaconda and Butte. At the end of the survey, the HAER team prepared recommendations for adaptive reuse of several historic buildings and for a downtown revitalization. This year a survey and an economic feasibility study of the downtown area will be completed.

Billings: A survey of a portion of Montana Avenue in 1978 resulted in the nomination of the Billings Townsite Historic District to the National Register. Two years later the city undertook a major survey, which was sponsored by the Community Development Office and aided by volunteers through Billings Landmarks. The Southside Billings Historic District and the Westside Billings Historic District have been officially determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register.

Bozeman Gallatin County: A local survey in 1978 of the residences located on South Willson resulted in the nomination and listing of the South Willson Historic District in the National Register. The City-County Planning Office in Bozeman is now sponsoring a city-wide historical and architectural survey, which will inventory over 2800 buildings. Numerous local volunteers are now working on the project. Two Montana State University students completed a county-wide thematic survey of one-room schoolhouses in 1980, and another thematic study of historic homesteads in the county is currently in progress under the sponsorship of the Museum of the Rockies.

Butte: In addition to earlier HAER surveys in Uptown Butte, the Butte Historical Society has undertaken a phased survey of all of the buildings located within the Butte National Historic Landmark District. Each year an additional neighborhood will be added to the survey, with the result that detailed information will be available for every building in the Butte Landmark district.

Deer Lodge: The Powell County Museum and Arts Foundation is now finishing up a city-wide survey of Deer Lodge. It is expected that a number of properties and historic districts will be recommended for nomination to the National Register.

Dillon: Sponsored by the Dillon Community Development Office, a systematic

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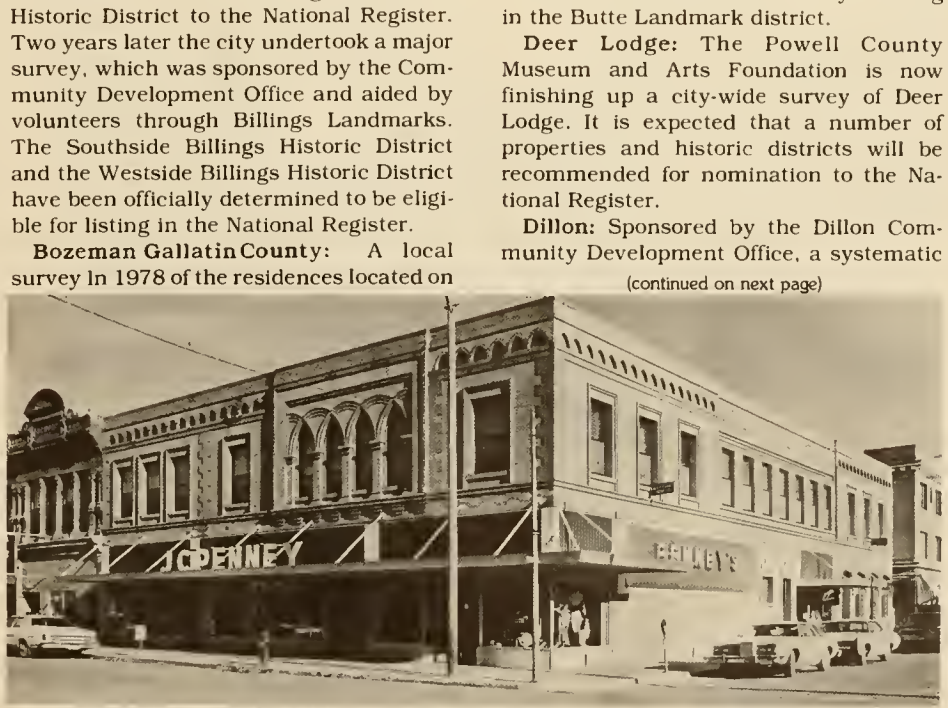

The city of Dillon possesses some of the state's finest late 19th and 20th century commercial architecture.

...in this issue

with Russell paintings and other artistic depictions of the past. The line between real historic events, cigarette commercial cowboys, and the West as portrayed in oil paintings is blurred.

Against that backdrop, our historic buildings and sites—the "real McCoys" regardless of condition—recall us to honesty and to a sense that people like us, if not our own families, lived through and made that past. We are forced to see events and landscapes and stories with an eye to the day-in-day-out stuff of human existence, rather than its rarefied romance. Our feet are brought down to the ground. Our memories are made less grand, but ever so much more compelling, when we are made to touch and live in Montana's historic homes and businesses.

I have found no finer passage explaining the importance of historic resources in keeping us honest and in understanding the genuine past, than in Wallace Stegner's *Wolf Willow*.

> Our homestead lay south of here, right on the Saskatchewan-Montana border. . . . It would be no more than thirty or forty miles out of my way, now, and yet I do not turn south to try to find it, and I know very well why. . . . I don't want to find, as I know I will if I go down there, that we have vanished without a trace like a boat sunk in mid-ocean. I don't want our shack to be gone, as I know it is; I would not enjoy hunting the ground around it for broken crockery and rusty nails and bits of glass. I don't want to know that our protective pasture fence has been pulled down to let the prairie in. . . . Once, standing alone under the bell-jar sky gave me the strongest feeling of personal singularity I shall ever have. That was because it was all new, we were taking hold of it to make it ours. But to return and find every trace of our passage wiped away—that would be to reduce my family, myself, the hard effort of years, to solipsism, to make us fictive as a dream.

So, why value historic properties before they are lost, as Stegner found them to be? Why value even the ordinary bungalows and false-fronted stores or our small towns? Because they keep you and me honest about our state's past and the histories of our families and communities. In the presence of these resources, if we see them for what they are, we will treat those pasts as real and we won't take undue glory from them. We have the ability to translate the myths and stories about yesteryear in Montana into every-day realities, rather than seeing them as fairy tales. It is, you see, one very valuable thing, to have on tape the oral reminiscences of an early logger. It is another equally important thing to have the remnants still standing of the flumes that he and his predecessors used to transport logs over great distances. The tape-recorded memory tells us how it all worked; the flume tells us that the heroics of the lumberjacks were genuine.

Finally, why do we then impose a system—a survey—on our search for significant historic properties? Because doing our homework, being systematic about our study of historic buildings and sites, makes our judgment of relative value sharper and more apt to stand the test of time.

Marcella Sherfy

...survey round-up

architectural survey of a major portion of the city was completed in 1981.

Fort Benton: The systematic survey of the entire city of Fort Benton, sponsored by the Fort Benton Improvement Society, resulted in recommendations for a redefinition of the Fort Benton National Historic Landmark District.

East Helena: As part of a student project for the Montana State University Extension course in Preservation Studies, a portion of the commercial district of East Helena was surveyed last year.

Great Falls: The Cascade County Historical Society and the Great Falls Community Development Office are sponsoring a systematic survey of the central portion of the city of Great Falls. This survey should be completed by December of this year.

Helena: In conjunction with the Helena Urban Renewal Program, a selective inventory of the commercial district and the westside residential neighborhood was completed in 1968 and resulted in the nomination of the Helena Historic District to the National Register in 1972. During 1981, the City sponsored a systematic survey of the South-Central neighborhood, which was made possible by the efforts of many volunteers.

Hot Springs: The Community Development Office in Hot Springs is sponsoring a systematic community-wide survey, which is expected to result in the identification of a number of properties for nomination to the National Register.

Kalispell: In 1980-1981, the Kalispell Community Development Office sponsored a survey that described nearly 3000 buildings. Four historic districts and 65 individual properties qualified for listing in the National Register.

Lewistown: The City-County Planning Office is just beginning a systematic survey of the city's central business district, and an historic district nomination to the National Register is expected to result.

Libby: A city-wide survey of Libby, sponsored by the Libby Museum, should be completed by December of this year.

Livingston: Livingston has the distinction of having the first city-wide survey completed in Montana. Sponsored by the City of Livingston in 1969, that survey resulted in the listing of three historic districts and nine individual properties.

Lodge Grass: The Lodge Grass Community Development Office sponsored a systematic inventory of all buildings located within the townsite. A number of properties were identified as being potentially eligible for listing in the National Register.

Missoula: The Missoula Community Development Office survey in 1980 identified approximately 800 buildings in the city, mostly on the north side of the Clark Fork River. An Eastside Residential Historic District and a number of individual properties have been officially determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register. This year, the Fort Missoula Museum is undertaking a comprehensive inventory of the Fort buildings.

Northern Cheyenne Reservation: The Northern Cheyenne Planning Office's reservation-wide survey of historic sites identified nearly 150 significant properties, many of which may be eligible for National Register inclusion.

Philipsburg: The Granite County Planning Office's architectural survey of Philipsburg has been completed, with the result that a large historic district and a number of individual properties may be eligible for listing on the National Register.

Plains: The Plains Community Development Office completed a selective inventory of historic properties in the community in 1981.

Red Lodge: Carbon County Historical Society's systematic survey of Red Lodge resulted in the identification of four historic districts and 14 individual properties for nomination to the National Register, and a portion of the Red Lodge Commercial Historic District was listed this year.

Roundup: The historical and architectural survey of Roundup is now underway, sponsored by the Roundup Community Development Office. This survey is expected to be completed this fall.

Troy: The Troy Development Office sponsored a systematic survey of the community during 1980-1981 that resulted in the identification of 32 properties for nomination to the National Register.

West Yellowstone: A community-wide survey of West Yellowstone, sponsored by the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce, resulted in the nomination and listing of the Oregon Shortline Terminus Historic District and two other historic buildings in the National Register.

Historic Buildings: Lost or in Jeopardy

In the course of the last six months, the Montana landscape lost, or partially lost, the buildings portrayed in this photo essay. Likely many more are also gone. The ones we print have simply received more attention.

We seek to tweak your consciousness with these photos. Preservationists, of course, do not want all old buildings kept; we are not out to stop time. Instead, we want people and organizations to weigh the value of historic buildings against other needs, costs, factors, and purposes before those buildings come down. Decisions regarding historic buildings should be deliberate and made on solid grounds of reliable, up-to-date information on rehabilitation costs, community sentiment, and the role that historic buildings play in human values.

Montana has a long way to go in reaching that desired end. Whether pertinent in the cases of these buildings, or the many others we are not depicting, vandalism, an interest in outwitting preservationists, corporate expediency, or simply neglect account for too many of our building deaths. We need public alertness more than public mourning.

A few of Montana's, last, damaged or endangered structures (clockwise, from the top) are pictured here: three buildings in historic Marysville were completely burned, the apparent result of arson; the Bale of Hay Saloon in Virginia City suffered major fire damage in late spring; just after listing on the National Register, Missoula's Belmont Hotel was damaged by fire—rehabilitation is planned; the first building completed on University of Montana's campus, the Science Hall (1897), was demolished this fall.

Preservation Grants Awarded

In August, the State Historic Preservation Office announced the awarding of nearly $400,000 in preservation grants under the provisions of the Emergency Supplemental Jobs Bill of 1983.

The 1983 grant recipients and their projects are:

Carbon County Hospital and Sanitarium [The Flower Shop], Red Lodge, $6,991, facade restoration;

Picket Building [Marchello Hardware], Red Lodge, $4,500, facade restoration;

Anaconda City Hall [Copper Village Museum and Art Center], Anaconda, $25,000, replace metal roof and structural stabilization;

St. Mark's Church, Anaconda, $2,100, roof restoration;

St. Leo's Episcopal Church, Lewistown, $3,500, repair of deteriorated exterior trim and repainting;

Chisholm House [Kenneth and Ruthmary Tonn], Bozeman, $20,000, rehabilitation and restoration for adaptation to a bed-and-breakfast inn;

Union Pacific Dining Lodge [Federation of Fly Fishers], West Yellowstone, $50,000, rehabilitation for adaptation to the International Fly Fishing Center;

Jefferson County Courthouse, Boulder, $50,000, interior and exterior restoration work;

Cannon House [Charlotte Knaub], 303 Broadway, Helena, $4,250, completion of exterior restoration work in conjunction with adaptative use as an office building;

Lewis and Clark County Courthouse, Helena, $37,409, facade restoration and stone repair;

Union Pacific Dining Lodge at West Yellowstane, Montana.

J. M. Keith Mansion [Sigma Chi Building Foundation], 1110 Gerald Avenue, Missoula, $12,000, energy conservation in accordance with sound preservation standards to be used as a case study;

John R. Toole House [Kappa Kappa Gamma Alumni Building Association], 1005 Gerald Avenue, Missoula, $10,700, restoration of deteriorated porches and roof, repainting in appropriate historic colors;

St. Francis Xavier Church, Missoula, $50,000, structural stabilization as the basis for conservation of the culturally significant Brother Carignano murals;

Mantel Block and D'Archeul Building [Christie Furniture], 20 West Broadway, Butte, $12,000, facade restoration.

M & M Cigar Store (Charles Bugni), 9 North Main, Butte, $2,250, facade restoration;

Residence (Stephen and Brenda Willner), 929 West Copper, Butte, $1,190, exterior, porch, roof and fence restorations;

Louis S. Cohn Building (M. J. Lange), 64-66 West Broadway, Butte, $23,325, facade restoration and rehabilitation of vacant upper floors for use as a pre-release center;

Krohne Island (Dwight Krohne), 320 East Park Street, Livingston, $5,000, restoration of porches, roof and cast iron fountain;

Livingston Commercial District, facade restoration (City of Livingston), $50,000, rehabilitation of fifteen commercial facades within the historic district.

National Register Listings Update

The following properties have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places during the past five months:

Flathead County:
Granite Park Chalet, Glacier National Park (6/27/83)

Gallatin County:
Blackmore Apartments, Bozeman (7/7/83)

Glacier County:
Going-to-the-Sun Road, Glacier National Park (6/16/83)

Missoula County:
John R. Toole House (Kappa Kappa Gamma House), Missoula (4/25/83)
Fred T. Sterling House, Missoula (7/7/83)
John M. Keith House (Sigma Chi House), Missoula (7/7/83)

Powell County:
Northern Pacific Railroad Completion Site: 1883 (8/18/83)

Valley County:
Fort Peck Theatre, Fort Peck (6/27/83)

Survey & Planning Funds Now Available

The Historic Preservation Office has received official notification from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, of the continuation of survey and planning funding through the next fiscal year. Montana's total apportionment will be $353,041. Of this amount, $88,260 will be used to support the Preservation Office activities during the next year and $264,781 soon will be available for community survey and other historic preservation planning projects.

These monies must be matched with local funds or equivalent value in donated services put toward the completion of the project itself. Sources of local funding may be public or private donations, city or county funding, Community Development Block Grant Funds, the donated time of volunteers working on the survey, or any combination of the above.

Funding for survey and planning projects is available for local historical groups, community development offices, city or county planning offices, or other public or private organizations which are interested in conducting an historical and architectural survey, undertaking thematic studies of particular types of historic resources, completing an economic feasibility study for commercial or residential area revitalization or rehabilitation, or for the development of local preservation plans. The survey area or planning district may consist of a neighborhood, a commercial district, an entire community, or even a portion of a county.

Grant applications for survey and preservation planning funding assistance should be submitted to the Montana Historic Preservation Office before November 30, 1983.

For survey and planning application materials or for more information on survey and planning grants, please write or call Marcella Sherfy or Patricia Bick at the Montana Historical Preservation Office, 225 N. Roberts, Helena 59620 (406) 449-4584.

Montana Post *Preservation* is published quarterly as a supplement to *Montana Post* by the State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Historical Society, 225 N. Roberts, Helena, 59620. Funds for this publication are provided by the State of Montana and the National Park Service, Department of the Interior

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